Fire in Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust, Mumbai

1280. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a fire took place in Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust, Mumbai, on the night of 29th-30th December, 1996; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) Yes, Sir. A fire broke out in Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust in bulk Handling system at around 2000 hrs. on 29th December, 1996.

(b) Enquiry conducted by the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust has revealed that the fire at the Port resulted from the ignition of sulphur being transferred from conveyor belt to the sulphur storage shed.

Development of National Highways in 9th Five Year Plan

1281. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to lay greater emphasis on the development of National Highways in 9th Five Year Plan;

(b) if so, the fund earmarked therefor; and

(c) the details of the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Ninth Five Year Plan is yet to be finalised and it is too early to give the details of funds earmarked.

(c) A new policy guidelines for the speedy development of National Highways has recently been approved.

Development of Inland Waerways Transport

1282. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to implement measures for the faster development of Inland Waterways Transport;

(b) whether the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and some other Government organisations have given some suggestions to the Government in the matter;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKAT-RAMAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) has submitted certain suggestions concerning development of IWT to Government.

(c) Requisite information is given in Statement *(See* below).

(d) The matter is being processed.

Statement

List of Suggestions made by FICCI on Development of IWT

1. Inland Water Transport (IWT) should be notified in the Official Gazette as "infrastructure facility by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBTD) so that the concessions as per provisions of 80-IA of Income Tax Act, 1961 are made available in the case of Inland Water facilities Section 80-IA(12)(Ca) as substituted by the Finance Act, 1995 effective from 1.4.1996 excerpt given below permits is-sues of such notification.

Section 80 IA, Sub 'Section 12 (Ca)

"Infrastructure facility" means a road, highway, bridge, airport, port, rail system or any other pub--lie facility of a similar nature as